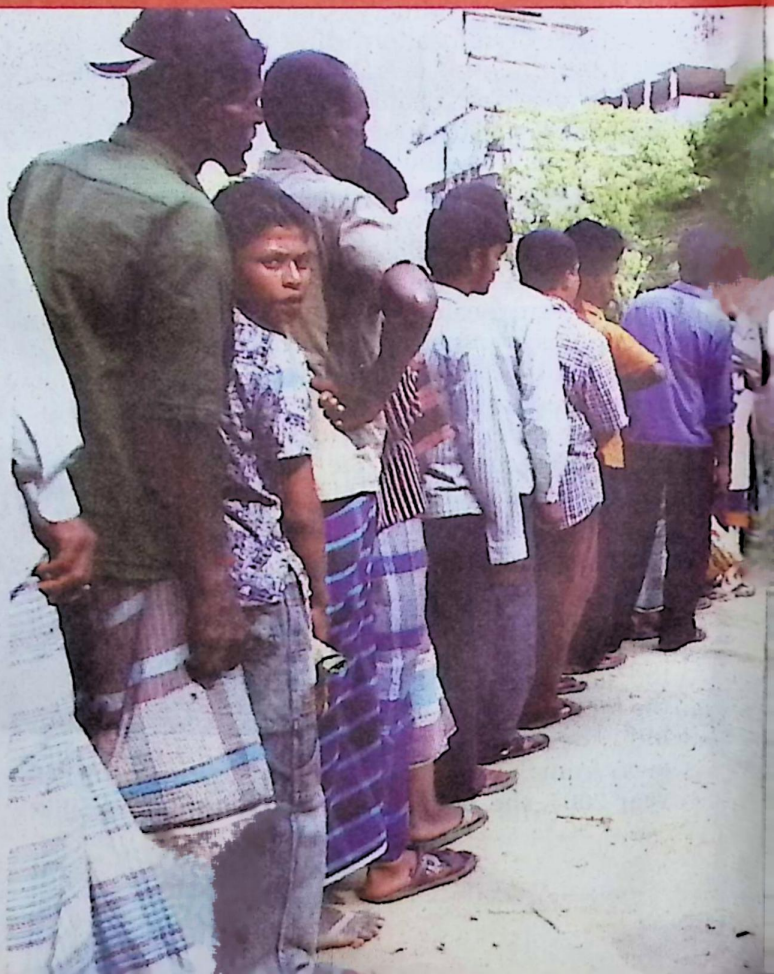
It is often said that when we look back at the times we have lived through our memories are what we want them to be. The reason is that the past always seems like a better, friendlier place, where children respected their elders, politicians were honest and prices were reasonable. If that is true, then how will these times be remembered in a generation from now? Will we remember a friendlier, better Bangladesh where politicians were honest and prices were low? One feels our memories will not be so cheerful, as we are living through the toughest times of our lives, where even a reasonable salary is not enough to provide for a family. Those who don't even have a steady salary may not remember it at all, they may not even be around to remember it.



A Price too

NADER RAHMAN
Photos: ZAHEDUL I. KHAN



Why? It seems a reasonable question, only to those who don't have their head buried in the sand. With prices rising and incomes remaining relatively the same the people of Bangladesh are in dire straits. They will not look back at these times fondly; some may not even look back at all and some may have perished as a result of the economic downturn the nation is currently going through. The simple answer may be that food prices have spiralled beyond control and that now every income group is struggling to feed its self. But the question still remains, why has this happened? How has it happened, and what can be done? The answer lies partly in the fact that while prices rises were almost inevitable the income levels of average Bangladeshis have not risen as well. With the same salaries people are being forced to buy food and necessities at astronomical prices, thereby crippling every other aspect of life.

Nurul Islam a 48-year-old day labourer is one of the millions of people who has to survive without a fixed income. He says, "Firstly I do not get work that often, if I am lucky once a week and that is simply Tk 150 a day. How can I feed myself, my wife and two children on Tk